

January 15, 2009


Senate Judiciary Committee

Chairman Perry and Members of the Committee:

I respectfully request your support for Senate Bill 191 and the creation of dedicated funding for court security. The establishment of a surcharge for users of our Courts, at all levels of our court system, will help to provide funding necessary to ensure the safety of the general public as they access our justice system. There is no greater responsibility we share as elected public servants than to provide for public safety, but we must do so in a cost effective and rational manner. While the facility and operational costs for each District Court, Justice Court, Municipal and City Court will be borne by the agencies currently responsible for those costs, Senate Bill 191 places the burden for increased security costs squarely on the shoulders of those that cause the demand for security services.

Senate Bill 191 allows all the money collected to remain in the jurisdiction that provides space for the Courts. Local officials can then determine how to efficiently use the money to provide the necessary safety provisions for their courts. Instead of continuing to burden the local taxpayers for increased security costs, Senate Bill 191 attempts to share the burden with the users of the court system. The bill provides that essential component of local control, allocates the cost to the appropriate entity, and ensures that public safety remains at the forefront of our efforts in providing efficient judicial processing. The adoption of Senate Bill 191 is good for your counties, your cities, and your towns because it provides a mechanism for increased safety for the employees, jurors, and general public that uses your court systems. I thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 191 and urge your support.

Sincerely,



Eric Bryson
Bozeman City Commissioner